

- **Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) – a Maryland overview**

- **Maryland Primary Care Office (PCO)**
 - Family Health Administration, Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene
- July 2010

Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs)

- Definition
- Federal authority/oversight
- Process for development
- Federal, state and other support
- Health care reform

FQHCs - defined

- **Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) are:**
 - public and private, non-profit, health care organizations,
 - that meet certain criteria under the Medicare and Medicaid Programs of the Social Security Act, and
 - receive federal grant funds under the Health Center Program (Section 330 of the Public Health Service Act)

FQHC – oversight

- **Federal**
 - HRSA's Bureau of Primary Health Care provides oversight, primarily through FQHC submission of an annual Unified Data System (UDS) report to detail services provided, patient demographics, provider specifics, and other information.
 - One or more HRSA Project Officers is responsible for all or some of the FQHCs in each state
- **Local oversight is provided by each FQHC's Governing Board whose composition must include all segments of the community served and expertise required to oversee operations**

FQHCs - types

- **Types of FQHCs include:**
 - Community Health Centers
 - Migrant Health Centers
 - Health Care for the Homeless Programs
 - Public Housing Primary Care Programs
- **FQHC-Look Alike** meets all the criteria of an FQHC but do not receive 330 funding
 - Only one in Maryland
 - Owensville Primary Care in Anne Arundel County

FQHC - patients

- **FQHCs:**
 - **Must be located in or serve residents of a federally designated Medically Underserved Area (MUA) or Medically Underserved Population (MUP) regardless of ability to pay**
 - Maryland has 15 FQHCs and one FQHC-LA that serve residents of one or more of the 40 MUAs and 12 MUPs in the state (June 30, 2010)
 - In 2008, according to the UDS, the 92 service sites of MD's FQHCs served 238,998 patients

FQHCs – federal grant awards

- Continuing funds for established FQHCs that meet performance requirements
- Awarded on a competitive basis for:
 - New starts
 - Not always available to every state, e.g., may exclude those without 'high poverty'
 - Expansions of existing FQHCs
 - To add new service sites
 - To expand/add new services for specialty areas such as dental, mental health, pharmacy, etc

FQHCs – application process

- Selected requirements include:
 - Board of Directors
 - Completed needs assessment
 - Demonstrated capability to provide comprehensive array of health services, directly/through referrals
 - Description of staffing requirements
 - Documented accessibility
 - Quality improvement and assurance plan
 - Established collaborative relationships for needed health services and supplementary funding
 - Proposed budget, financial management/control policies, program data reporting/billing/collection systems

FQHCs – federal grant preparation

- Applicant – FQHC grant must be prepared and submitted by advocates of the community of interest, e.g., not by the State
- Planning grants – in recognition of the complexity and cost of the application process, HRSA awards planning grants (competitively) to assist candidates with completing the preliminary steps necessary, prior to completion of a full FQHC grant application

FQHCs – PCO services

- PCO – the Primary Care Office, one in each state, funded by HRSA
 - PCO researches/prepares/submits MUA/MUP proposals to HRSA
 - PCO manages health workforce programs – J1 Visa Waiver, LARP, and NHSC – and the related HPSA process, to assist FQHCs and other safety net providers with recruitment of health professionals
 - PCO provides t/a to FQHCs for planning, grant development, and other special needs

FQHCs- other funding

- Maryland
 - DHMH funds capitol grants for construction/renovations
 - Community Health Resources Commission
- Other federal funds
 - Medicaid enhanced reimbursement
 - Medicare enhanced reimbursement
- Private sources
 - Community, foundation, and other sources

FQHC – private support

- PCA – federally funded Primary Care Association – MidAtlantic Association of Community Health Centers – provides training and t/a to FQHCs/applicants
- Network – HRSA also funds Health Center Controlled Network – Community Health Integrated Partnership (CHIP) in MD – which works to enhance health center operations/health information technology

FQHCs – malpractice coverage

- The Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) provides malpractice liability protection for FQHCs and other eligible entities.
- The FTCA makes deemed Health Centers (and their officers, directors, employees and certain contractors) Federal employees for claims and suits arising out of medical or related functions
- As Federal employees, they are immune from medical malpractice claims for actions within the Health Center's approved scope of project.

FQHCs – Health Care Reform

- Authorizes and appropriates \$9.5 billion to expand Community Health Centers' capacity to serve nearly 20 million new patients and to enhance their medical, oral, and behavioral health services
- Also authorizes and appropriates \$1.5 billion to allow Community Health Centers' to meet their capital needs by expanding and improving existing facilities and constructing new sites.

FQHCs – additional information

- For more details on FQHCs, visit the HRSA website: <http://bphc.hrsa.gov/about/>
- For more information from Maryland's PCO, contact the PCO or visit the PCO website at:
 - Elizabeth Vaidya, PCO Director
410-767-5300 and/or evaidya@dhhm.state.md.us
 - PCO website:
http://fha.maryland.gov/ohpp/pco_home.cfm